

**National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG)
Smoke Committee (SmoC)
Monthly Activity Update – June/July 2012**

I. SmoC News Topics

A. 2012 Wildfire Smoke Response and Coordination Efforts

- Air Resource Advisor positions (air quality specialists) have been successfully implemented as part of Incident Management Teams on a number of incidents and Area Commands thus far this year.
- Evacuees notified of natural and non-natural fuel emissions via flyers.
- Some issues with monitoring data and interpretations of monitoring tags. Monitoring locations also in question. Relaying data to the public is challenging.
- Monitoring of CO per NWCG memo and National Cache PM monitors creating confusion in the field.

B. Communication and Messaging

- Concern regarding PIO and lack of smoke training. Response reactionary not proactive.
- Material transfer from old SmoC site to new NWCG SmoC
 - People who can't get there are going to NIFC.gov/program.
 - Old link at Nifcc.gov/smoke>tools>NEPA directs users to the CEQ website. Problems finding NEPA examples for smoke.

C. New NRCS Representative to replace Susan O'Neill

- Doug Whisenhunt—State (Nebraska) Rx Burn Specialist, one of the national NRCS burning experts.
- Worked with Fire Air Coordination Team, FS Seasonal Suppression, BLM range Specialist, TNC Rx fire with private landowners
- Goal is to stay informed on current events and help private land groups impacted by regulations

D. JFSP Consortia Meeting

- Heath Hockenberry, Ed Delgado, Al Riebau, Mark Fitch and Pete Lahm presented on smoke generating a lot of dialogue.
 - Specifically the smoke training committee/knowledge consortium participation. There are 14 consortia around the US to work with Universities, private, public, and federal burners to get scientific knowledge into the field.
 - Christine Olson is willing to participate in the 2013 Smoke Symposium – either setting up a track for the consortium or public perception of smoke.
 - Incident teams perceptions of smoke built into the 4-hour training course. This topic could be built into that the training subcommittee is working on. Pete knows some people willing to collaborate on this effort.
 - Get a contact list for consortiums and provide SmoC activity updates and one pagers.

E. Draft Exceptional Events Implementation Guidance

- Holding phone calls with those interested in making comments on draft EER guidance.

F. HYSPLIT Trajectories as part of NWS Spot Weather Forecasts

- NWS office to office variability in making spot forecasts available
- Website for NWS/OK, interactive county by county weather forecasts. Spot forecasts are also available
- NWS inconsistencies on spot weather forecasts. Some cases no agency information was required. In North Platte NE, private burners could not obtain a spot weather forecast unless they are working with a federal partner.

G. NWCG Smoke Exposure bulletin

- Follow-up/implementation issues—Mark made guidelines. Needs to discuss further with Herb.
- Individual agency messaging—Mark wrote cover letter. Status is unclear.
- Presentation by Joe Domitrovich and George Broyles for 7/26 call. Focused on implementation, fire crews, exposure, and monitoring.

H. Smoke Monitoring

- 11/15 National Cache units deployed.
- Forest Air Program (Region 2) possibly adding their monitors to National Cache.
- Order is in for FS transition to GOES satellite telemetry system—will start updating units.

I. Weather-Ready Nation – Heath Hockenberry – NWS

Presentation:

http://www.nws.noaa.gov/com/weatherreadynation/files/NWS_WRN_Roadmap.pdfhttp://www.nws.noaa.gov/com/weatherreadynation/files/NWS_WRN_Roadmap.pdf

- Heath is lead for NWS fire weather program in Boise, works with Robyn Heffernan.
- Portal for comments for non-NOAA websites will likely be open for a while (Heath can also take comments and pass them on). probably end of August heath.hockenberry@noaa.gov
- SmoC input would be great, some talk has happened with FENC about hiring fire weather specialists, instead of recruiting generalists into these positions.
- Some items emphasized by FENC include:
 - requirements for IMET in NIIMS and acknowledging training in the IQCS system
 - weather service retains face to face trainings
 - fire weather forecasters be dedicated in the workforce plan
 - Mike Broughton for SmoC to follow-up on questions about how smoke fits into the vision.

II. New Topics

A. Interagency Smoke Management Program Assessment – Pete

- Smoke is not a program, it is an *activity*.
- Activities—training and research efforts, deployments, communication plans.
- Smoke efforts during On-the-Ground operations.
- Need an assessment regarding smoke efforts—Pete can hire a contractor.
- Enough information to support proposing smoke as a program.
- Mike B—public beginning to understand reasons to burn but not efforts to limit smoke exposure. This information should be included with ‘why we burn’.
- Great investment and effort to dealing with or training.

- Include smoke in 2013 symposium.
- Explore: what it is, how many people involved, what are the issues and where are they being covered.

III. NWCG Business

- CESU for the second year of the SMG and 4-hr course is now official
- NWCG web portal status uncertain
- Susan's last official call was on 6/28. Doug Whisenhunt (State Rx Burn Specialist), one of the national NRCS burning experts has agreed to be the NRCS rep for SmoC. Also seeking participation from Greg Johnson (NRCS Air Quality and Atmospheric Change).
- Suggested that Mike Broughton fill the Vice-Chair position and remain the Chair of the Smoke Managers Subcommittee.
- Webmaster position is vacant—contact Mike. Opening is not exclusive to SmoC members. Good opportunity to learn field/get national perspective
- NWCG is providing funds for a year for a contractor to help committees develop web portals to begin about mid August.
- Deb Flemming (GATRs) collecting comments/concerns on Rx-410. Currently no plan to change Rx-410 in the near future.
- Wildland Fire Institute Board of Directors is looking at Dean roles and responsibilities. The large school has many resources and smoke is included in curriculum.
- NWCG Board Meeting
 - Memo June 12—CO monitoring results at incident base camps
 - Memo July—final edits of 410-1 fireline handbook
 - IC tasking/implementation plan next steps
 - Discussion of implications reducing budget by \$.5 million/year until 2015
 - All subcommittee charters signed by Elaine
 - Pete—on July agenda for discussing roster and chair and vice chair nominations
 - Mark—financial business report
 - Elaine's comments addressed

J. Subcommittee Report-Outs

a. Technical Smoke Topics Subcommittee

- Draft Charter signed.
- MyFireCommunity site set up for HYSPLIT SMEs. Pete sent a document to Ed Delgado. Susan's group also has an FTP site if needed.
- Smoke Management Plan Guide revisions are progressing. More than half the chapters are over 50% completed. Goal is completing draft by late fall.
- DEASCO—lead by Tom Moore. Meeting on Wed (6/27). ½ hour webinar Thursday (6/28).

b. Training Subcommittee

- Identifying training topics and categories for the 4 hour wildfire smoke training call. Mark is working on summary material.
- Finalizing IQCS report

c. Smoke Managers Subcommittee

- Meeting to cover EPA update – NAAQS and exceptional events, Smoke Challenge and Smoke Solutions “When a Good Fire Goes Bad), and Air Resources Advisors, smoke and AQ messaging.

IV. Round Robin

A. International Emission Conference

- Pete is on a panel and Mark plans to attend. Oklahoma DEQ will have 2 attendees. Request any SmoC materials/highlight the monitoring work. PM NAAQS Court ruling and timing.

B. Spot weather/HYSPLIT Availability

State	Requesting entity	HYSPLIT/Spot Weather	Assisting agency
NC	Non-feds	Yes	State Forest Service
FL	Non-feds	Yes	State Forest Service
CA	Public/private burner	Yes	None
OK	Public/private burner	Yes	None (on NWS website)

C. PM NAAQS

- June 14, 2012, EPA proposed the new PM NAAQS
- Docket ID number: **EPA-HQ-OAR-2007-0492** for comments.
- Public hearings: July 17, 2012, Philadelphia, PA, & July 19, 2012, Sacramento, CA.
- Written comments must be postmarked by August 31, 2012.

D. Report from FS National Air Resource Program Meeting – Pete

Well attended from all over Region 8. Good dialogue on smoke FARM team. Topics included how to communicate what we are doing, why we are doing it, and to whom. Regions concerned whether or not having a smoke specialist would help their RX programs and allow them to get more acres burned& likelihood of maintaining smoke personnel. Concerned with how the PM proposal will impact smoke and fire, as well as how emission inventories are developed. Collected 16 names for air resource advisors now, several of which are from EPA. Main points are available to FS internally.

E. Alabama smoke monitoring

Wrapping up and they are putting together a summary report for the southeast region. 22 burns Jan-May ~22,000 acres. Dan is hoping to have a report out for the group in the next couple of months.

F. Visibility conference

Susan’s poster accepted—work that Susan, Pete, Mark, and Mike have been working on.

G. Inside EPA

- Document from EPA June 20/21– limited consultations on revised wildland fire policy.
- The states expressed frustration that they have been in the dark so long on this topic.

H. Air Managers meeting in Sacramento – Shawn

Rob Griffith presented on large landscape burns. Also, IC team approach toward air quality.

I. Smoke Wildfire Assignment “Dad Fire” Super-Fog Event

- Intel provided by NWS PFW for Dad Fire
- Gary Curcio is trying to get a “Lessons Learned” PowerPoint put together and will provide updates

J. Smoke modeling tool

- new version of CONSUME: work on to incorporate reality of organic / duff consumption and SE Shrubs for better projection of fuel consumption - Gary Curcio
- Next version of CONSUME could be out around the fall, trying to address eastern fuel beds (too much consumption) and approach to organic fuelbeds (not consuming enough of these)
- Jim Reardon, Roger, Susan, and Gary working to incorporate data from Missoula lab to increase the accuracy of the organic fuelbed consumption.
- K. Monitoring & Mitigating Exposure to CO and PM at Incident Base Camps**
 - Concerns regarding the monitors and the relationship between CO and PM.
- L. EPA webinar on air pollution and strokes—**
 - Time lag in exposure and stroke.
- M. Oklahoma Smoke Management Plan—Diana**
 - Have met with state FS.
 - Tentative to EPA by end of year.
- N. NACAA Criteria Pollutant committee call—Gordon Anderson:**
 - Bill Harnett (EPA) Fire policy is in internal EPA discussion.
 - No closure on any issues yet.
 - Have not yet talked to the states or followed up with federal agencies.
 - Full EPA discussion planned for mid September. Mid October for discussion outside EPA.
 - Concerns/issues:
 - Rx burns are more problematic than wildfire (fed need to show conformity w/state plan).
 - EPA using same terminology as other agencies for planned and unplanned ignitions.
 - EPA does not want to make states revise existing smoke plans.
- O. EPA International Emissions Inventory Conference - If a few SmoC members are going we should coordinate on this.**
- P. Agricultural Air Quality Task Force Meeting 1st week in August.**

V. Upcoming Conferences and Webinars

EPA International Emissions Inventory Conference, August 13 - 16, 2012, Hyatt Regency in Tampa, FL
http://www.epa.gov/ttn/chief/conference/index_papers.html

Air & Waste Management Association, Visibility & Air Pollution,
 September 24-28, 2012, Whitefish, MT,
<http://visibility.awma.org/>

5th International Fire Ecology and Management Congress: Uniting Research,
 Education and Management, The Association for Fire Ecology, December 3-7,
 2012, Portland, Oregon
<http://afefirecongress.org/>

American Geophysical Union Fall Meeting, December 3-7, 2012, San Francisco, CA
<http://fallmeeting.agu.org/2012/>

4th Fire Behavior and Fuels Conference, February 18-22, 2013, Raleigh, NC,
<http://www.iawfonline.org/2013FuelsConference/index.php>